

COLDITZ COVE
CLASS II NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Fentress

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Grimsley and Burrville

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Cumberland Plateau

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

ACREAGE: 165

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1984

DESCRIPTION: Colditz Cove is a 165-acre natural area located approximately two miles east of Allardt, Tennessee in Fentress County. Its most impressive feature is Northrup Falls. This is one of Tennessee's most stunning waterfalls plunging more than 60 feet over a protruding rock ledge into a scenic, narrow, gorge along Big Branch Creek. The waterfall is named for the family who settled here and operated a mill above the falls in the 1800's. These high cliffs and "rock houses" (cave-like overhangs) at the falls and along the creek gorge, were once used by cliff-dwelling Woodland Indians over 3,000 years ago. These people primary used these shelters during hunting season.

The dry ridges above the falls support a mixed oak-hickory forest dominated by white oak with Virginia pine scattered throughout. On the more xeric southwest bluff, oaks, hemlock, Virginia and short leaf pine are common with a shrub lay of mountain laurel underneath. Below the falls, following Big Branch Creek, large hemlocks and white pines, believed to be over 200 years old prominently grow. Beneath these trees, thickets of rhododendron form along the creek, providing important habitat for riparian plant and animal species. The spray field from the falls creates a unique habitat on the rock ledges underneath and in the vicinity of the falls. Several species of ferns, sedges, rushes, and plants like grass-of-parnassus and alumroot are associated with this waterfall-gorge habitat.

Colditz Cove is also home to several, relatively rare animals including the Black Mountain dusky salamander (*Desmognathus welteri*), the woodland jumping mouse (*Napaeozapus insignis*), the smoky shrew (*Sorex fumeus*), the pygmy shrew (*Sorex hoyi*), and the southeastern shrew (*Sorex longirostris*).

SITE MANAGEMENT: **Pickett CCC Memorial State Park**, 4605 Pickett Park Highway, Jamestown, TN 38556, phone (931) 879-5821; **Division of Natural Areas**, 401 Church Street, 7th Floor L&C Annex, Nashville, TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431; **Division of Natural Areas – East TN Office**, 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921, phone (865) 594-5601.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Public access is allowed; parking and hiking trails are provided.

DIRECTIONS: From I-40 near Crossville, Tennessee, take Highway 127 North toward Jamestown. Before getting to Jamestown, turn right on State Route 296 east, toward the town of Allardt. In Allardt, take State Route 52 east. Just outside of town, but still within a residential area, turn right on Northrup Falls Road (County Road 1636). The sign for Colditz Cove State Natural Area is on the right about one mile down Northrup Falls Road.